

1 **IN A SMALL TOWN**

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by

MARC A. Di GIACOMO

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A MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHOR:

74 This book is dedicated to the brave men and women who
75 are our first line of defense against ourselves. It takes a
76 certain person to wear a bulletproof vest and carry a
77 loaded gun with professionalism and honor. Not everyone
78 is cut out to be a police officer, nor should just anyone be
79 appointed as such. There are no exceptions to having total
80 integrity while carrying that badge. Their dedicated
81 service makes us proud and ensures all of our safety.
82 Please thank a police officer if they ever help you, and
83 encourage your children to do the same. That simple
84 gesture may help them remember something good out of a
85 career dealing with the worst situations imaginable.

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*For my father,
Americo Di Giacomo Jr.,
my hero and biggest fan.*

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CHAPTER ONE

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August 3, 2007

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Not In Our Town

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I can't get it out of my mind. The lightning that exploded from the end of the barrel. The ripping orange flash off the black steel. The smell of gunpowder. The sound, like an M-80. And the pain—the fucking searing pain. It is permanently scorched into my memory. Everything but his face. The face I didn't see haunts me every second. All I remember are those ultra-white Reebok sneakers as he ran away. The fucking coward would have shot me in the back, but I turned around and caught the blast in the chest. I didn't have time to pull my Glock.

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The shot knocked me to the ground. I thought I was having a heart attack—I couldn't catch my breath. Then I understood what happened, and reality hit: I was going to die.

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It seemed to take minutes rather than seconds, but I managed to radio into headquarters. The response from the good guys was impressive, to say the least. They saved my life. Cops from my own town and others surrounded the scene. I knew they would come. When a

158 *cop gets shot, they all come, and with one thing in*
159 *mind—to find the bastard who pulled the trigger.*

160 *Things grew foggy. I saw blue uniforms scurrying*
161 *around the scene while white-clad EMTs lifted me onto*
162 *the gurney and loaded me into the ambulance. I could*
163 *hear people talking about me—reporters, other cops,*
164 *curious residents. “Detective Matthew Longo...Only 29*
165 *years old, been on the force nearly 10 years...Shot in the*
166 *fucking chest and shoulder. No wife or children. Parents*
167 *live in town; Hutchville lifers. Oh yeah, the town is*
168 *going to go batshit over this.”*

169 *Blood oozed from my left shoulder. My friend and*
170 *paramedic Scotty Franks hovered over me and placed*
171 *direct pressure on my wound. Even through my fog I*
172 *could tell he was holding back tears. My shoulder was*
173 *on fire. I never wore my bulletproof vest unless making*
174 *entry on a search warrant, or if a hot pursuit was*
175 *coming my way; then I quickly threw it over my shirt. I*
176 *was lucky I had it on that night. Maybe someone on the*
177 *other side was looking out for me.*

178 *I fell unconscious even with all the shouting*
179 *around me. I dreamed of my funeral and who would be*
180 *there. I saw myself in the blue box surrounded by a*
181 *sobbing crowd of familiar faces. My parents looked*
182 *horrible. My poor mother clutched her bible and rosary*
183 *beads. My dad kept his eyes glued to the floor, angry*
184 *and broken. My little brother Franny, in full uniform,*
185 *stood near my casket at full attention, his white gloves*
186 *damp from tears. Donny was there too, trying to keep it*
187 *together.*

188 *I heard Scotty screaming for me in the distance.*
189 *The poor guy loved me, but why was he screaming my*
190 *name, spitting all over my face, at my wake? Maybe I*
191 *should have had a closed casket.*

192 *Suddenly I felt him slapping me. I awoke and found*
193 *myself back inside the ambulance. Scotty took a deep*

194 *breath, in and out, and said, "Okay Matt, okay. Don't*
195 *do that again."*

196 *The pain was relentless, and I couldn't help but*
197 *cry. Scotty put a needle into an IV line in my arm and*
198 *the pain vanished almost immediately. "Don't give me*
199 *morphine Scotty," I managed to whisper. "It killed my*
200 *grandparents." Then I lost consciousness again, falling*
201 *into a world between life and death.*

202 *I heard someone screaming in the night. Was it*
203 *me? It was too dark to see. Where's Donny? I really*
204 *needed him now. Was I dreaming again or was this*
205 *some delusion of reality? I slapped myself and felt a*
206 *sharp sting, jolting me awake.*

207 It has been three weeks of hell living inside this
208 apartment. My social life has been placed on indefinite hold.
209 The phone rings constantly but who cares? I don't answer.
210 The window shades are drawn. I don't know if it's day or
211 night, and I don't give a shit.

212 Thankfully, the wound has been healing well. But I
213 look at my shoulder and am repulsed by the scar and missing
214 flesh. People say scars are sexy but this one may be the
215 exception. My left arm is still in a sling. At times, the pain is
216 still unbearable. The percocet I'm still taking makes me pass
217 out.

218 The sink is loaded with paper dishes and plastic cups.
219 Last week's dinner from my mother sits on the kitchen table
220 still wrapped in tin foil, and the smell is starting to ferment in
221 my kitchen. I can hear my Dad's deep voice in my head:
222 "Why don't you pull it together and clean up around here?
223 You're making your mother nervous." She's nervous? I can't
224 help laughing.

225 Hey Dad, your oldest son was almost shot dead in the
226 same small, safe community where we played Little League
227 baseball. Mind if I take a week or two to let that one sink in?

228 Only cops—and maybe some of their wives—realize
229 how dangerous police work can become in a millisecond.
230 Parents of cops usually choose to ignore the reality—it’s too
231 difficult to accept that a life-or-death choice awaits their son
232 or daughter at any moment. A bank robbery turns into a
233 shootout; a wanted felon gets pulled over for a broken tail-
234 light and decides suicide by cop is his only way to avoid a
235 lengthy jail sentence. As a detective, this is my everyday
236 reality.

237 This isn’t supposed to happen in a small town. We’ve
238 never had a police shooting—never. In fact, the last time we
239 had any kind of criminal shooting was ten years ago, and it
240 was a domestic dispute between a father and his cheating
241 son-in-law. These old-school Italians are no joke. The father
242 said his son-in-law disrespected him, so he “took care of it”
243 like they do in the old country.

244 It didn’t make any sense. It would have been one thing
245 if I had been shot on a traffic stop. But I was just picking up
246 a fucking pizza. Half pepperoni, half sausage. I was just
247 walking down the street. It wasn’t even dark out as the sun
248 was just setting in the western sky.

249 My mentor and partner Detective Domenico “Donny”
250 Mello always told me never to “go anywhere alone.” He
251 said, “Don’t even pick up lunch alone. A cop is always a
252 target for someone looking to become infamous. The public
253 hates us most of the time because our interactions are rarely
254 positive. Nobody calls us when they have a new baby but if
255 that baby isn’t breathing, there is no one else to call. Always
256 the bad,” he would say. “Always the bad.” I miss Donny.
257 He’s been away for three weeks at his family’s villa in Italy,
258 on the Amalfi coast. Did he even know I had been shot?

259 The press remains close by outside my apartment,
260 salivating for an interview, the fucking cretins. I’m the talk
261 of the town—everyone wants to know about the cop
262 shooting. Fuck them. Twice. Even if I wanted to relive the

263 horrifying experience for them, it goes against department
264 protocol.

265 I swallow down two percocets, lay down on the couch
266 and let the painkillers do their magic. In my head the image
267 haunts me—a dark shadow with the whitest fucking sneakers
268 you ever saw.

269

270 “Can I get you anything else Mr. Fretti?” The tall
271 brunette could walk any fashion runway in the world. The
272 quiet gentleman can feel her attraction illuminating his
273 personal space and replies, “*No signora, mi dispiace.*” The
274 pool at his resort is crystal blue and crowded just the way he
275 likes it. The cabana is private and the women are gorgeous.

276 “Paolo, what’s next paisan?” For a moment he forgot
277 there was someone lying on the couch next to him.

278 “*Fabrizio mio cugino, non lo so.*” Paolo Fretti sets his
279 sights on a dirty blonde exiting the pool in a light blue bikini.
280 The best part about his hotel is all the pool patrons and staff
281 are gorgeous women. He gestures one finger towards her and
282 she smiles walking right towards him with her inner thighs
283 gently brushing against each other. The water drops dripping
284 from her tanned skin leave dark shadows in the concrete
285 pavement. She has perfect cleavage with full natural breasts
286 hinting the slightest bounce as she approaches him awaiting
287 his request.

288 Paolo slides his uncut penis out from his red speedo
289 bathing suit and Fabrizio quickly gets up to close the gauzy-
290 white shades as he makes his departure. Paolo’s manhood
291 resembles a nice thick sopressata and the blonde wastes no
292 time. She is on him in seconds and gently makes his softness
293 her priority. She gently rocks back and forth gazing into his
294 green Sicilian eyes. She knows who she is dealing with and
295 wants nothing more than to please him in every way. It
296 doesn’t take long for her to realize he is close. She wants to

297 make this as personal as possible. This is her moment to
 298 shine as she is tired of dancing nude and longs for something
 299 better within the family. She slowly raises herself off of him,
 300 placing his hardness into her mouth. She knows how difficult
 301 this task is and is trying hard not to gag. She has been
 302 practicing on two bananas since she heard all the rumors
 303 regarding his girth. It is definitely bigger than previously
 304 mentioned during girl chatter in the locker room of the club.
 305 The difficult undertaking she finds herself in rewards her
 306 straight into the back of her throat with the warmest honey
 307 she has ever tasted. She has been told if he kisses you
 308 afterwards than you are destined for more of his attention. As
 309 she looks up at him, he appears mesmerized. He pulls her
 310 hair gently towards him and kisses her on the lips long and
 311 deep. She tries hard not to smile and remains passionate
 312 throughout his kiss.

313 “*Como ti chiami?*” She has never heard him speak
 314 before that question to which she nervously replies, “*Il mia*
 315 *nome e Maria.*” Don Paolo smiles as she gets up to leave,
 316 “*Aspettare, andare a cena con me stasera.*” Her mind races
 317 to answer, “dinner sounds good.”

318 As Maria departs the cabana, Fabrizio returns, as if on
 319 cue, with a glum look on his face. “What’s wrong? You look
 320 like someone ran over your puppy.” Fabrizio takes a deep
 321 breath, “The cop is alive, he made it.”

322 “You’re fucking kidding me right? Who told you?”

323 “It was on the internet, lohud.com,” Fabrizio started to
 324 sweat and it wasn’t because of the heat. Paolo sat up and
 325 began to retrace his steps that night. It wasn’t the first time
 326 he shot someone although he never pulled the trigger on a
 327 cop before. He understood if he was caught that night, it
 328 would have been a certain death sentence especially in that
 329 small town. The shell was a double O buckshot magnum. He
 330 saw the amount of blood. “Son of a bitch must have had his
 331 vest on,” Paolo said, certain it was the only way the cop
 332 could still be alive. “Who do we have in America close to

333 Hutchville?” Fabrizio answered quickly, “Gus, Don Paolo.”
334 Paolo’s memory ran a circular race inside his heated brain.
335 *Gus, is not strong enough for this assignment and he is too*
336 *sloppy. If you want something done right, you have to do it*
337 *yourself.* “Fabrizio, make arrangements for JFK airport next
338 week. I have to go back to finish the job.”

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